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What Adults Can Learn From Kids

Child Prodigy Adora Svitak has a few new ways of how the world needs to think, especially adults. Childish and irrational thinking are terms associated solely with kids. Svitak proposes, however, that these terms should be terminated because in many cases they apply to adults not just children. Her point is made clear when she compares previous adult actions to children actions. For example, adults caused imperialism and world wars. Then, children such as Anne Frank, Ruby Bridges, and Charlie Simpson made huge positive impacts during their lives. Maybe irrational and childish thinking is exactly what the world needs. Adults tend to think that irrational thinking leads impossible or unattainable ideas. While children are full of inspiring ideas or hopeful dreams such as ending world hunger. Children dream about perfection. Children believe in the possibilities. The Museum of Glass in Washington has a program called Kids Design Glass. Kids draw up their ideas. Since children don't think about the things that limit them, they end up having lots of ideas. They push the boundary of possibility. If adults want to be creative and come up with new ideas, then they cannot be rational in their thinking. Svitak states that "In order to make things reality, you must dream about it first." Using this playful thinking strategy, adults can open up to a new realm of ideas. Svitak believes that adults should learn from kids just as much as kids learn from adults. This concept could open the world up to the opportunities for new ideas and leaders that it needs.

Presenter: Adora Svitak
Video Date: Feb, 2010
Posted Date: April, 2010
Presentation Duration: 8:13



Link: http://www.ted.com/talks/adora_svitak.html

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How Schools Kill Creativity

Ken Robinson takes a good and hard look at our education system. He understands that education has deep meaning for people. From his view, schools stifle creativity rather than encouraging it. The school system puts an emphasis on creating hard workers rather than creative ones.

Robinson defines creativity as having original ideas that have value. He argues that in education, creativity is as important as literacy. However, school systems all around the world do not hold value of creativity. It is placed below all other programs and the first to be cut when needed. While attending school many highly talented, creative, and brilliant people think they are not. The reason for this is the things they excelled at in school were not valued or even stigmatized. These ways of thinking need to be changed. If you are not willing to be wrong, you will not come up with anything original.

School systems also foster an environment of self doubt. Starting off, kids will take a chance and have a go at what's in front of them. In the current school system we stigmatize students for giving wrong answers. In fact, mistakes are the worst thing you can make in an educational setting. The effect from this is enormous. From this, adults have learned and developed a fear of being wrong and creative. To change this, we need to change the school system. We need to place value on creativity to help education flourish.

Presenter: Ken Robinson
Video Date: Feb, 2006
Posted Date: June, 2006
Presentation Duration: 19:29



Link: http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity.html

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Tales of Creativity and Play

Tim Brown is the CEO of the design firm IDEO. He has implemented a unique approach to promoting company productivity and play. He molds the work environment into a place that supports creative thinking. This approach has lead employees to create some of the most innovative technology and designs in the country. The company IDEO has built its foundation on exploration, building, and role play.

Brown presents that the adult way of thinking sorely lacks creativity. The reason behind this is adults have developed a fear of judgment when sharing ideas and creativity. These habits have been ingrained and are extremely difficult to break. We need to evolve and forget adult behaviors that restrict our ways of thinking.

Trust plays a crucial role in developing these changes. Trust is essential to developing playful thinking and creativity. Kids that are located in a trusting environment are most free to play. With adults, the exact same rules apply. In a trusting environment we have the freedom to create and grow.

Creativity is an essential part of developing the workplace. Employees possess the ability to be serious, play, and be more productive. Brown proudly demonstrates that being creative will lead to more creative solutions, improve job efficiency, and help us feel better.

Presenter: Tim Brown
Video Date: May, 2008
Posted Date: Nov, 2008
Presentation Duration: 27:54



Link: http://www.ted.com/talks/tim_brown_on_creativity_and_play.html

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Child-Driven Education

Education scientist Sugata Mitra has done many experiments with children and self-organized learning. His first experiment involved travelling to New Delhi in 1999. Mitra installed a computer into a wall with Internet access. The children in New Delhi did not know much English. They also did not know how to surf the web. After about 2 months Dr. Mitra found that the children taught each other how to use the computer and Internet. They would record themselves singing, take pictures, and download programs. In all of his experiments he found that children are curious. They will learn what they want to learn. They will teach each other how to do things that are unknown to them. Placing them into a curious environment helped foster this type of learning. In his Gateshead experiment, Mitra found that self-learning in groups was even better than just self-learning alone. He told the children to get in groups of four. They were given a test and were allowed to use anything online to help with the answers. Two months later he gave them the same test but on paper this time. He found that their passing rate was the same. This led him to the conclusion that children learn better when they are self-learning in groups. These concepts can be used for adults as well. Children are curious and are always trying to learn something new no matter how difficult the task seems. If adults are placed in environments or situations that stimulate curiosity then new ideas will emerge.

Presenter: Sugata Mitra
Video Date: July, 2010
Posted Date: Sept, 2010
Presentation Duration: 17:14



Link: http://www.ted.com/talks/sugata_mitra_the_child_driven_education.html

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Evolution's Gift of Play, From Bonobo Apes to Humans

Primatologist Isabel Behncke believes she has found the secret to human survival deep within the jungles of the Congo. The bonobo apes, our closest living relative from the ape family, live in these jungles. Play rules the day. Fun is serious business in this community of primates. So often apes are known for their aggressiveness, but bonobo apes have developed a highly tolerable and nonviolent society. The value these mammals have placed on play has been foundational in managing conflict and solving problems within their species. This type of "playful" thinking is one that can be and should be adopted by humans. So often being playful as an adult is frowned upon. It is deemed not appropriate for workplace environments. These "make love not war apes" have shown us that being playful is foundational for building relationships and fostering tolerance and resilience. It is the glue binds us together. Play requires and builds trust and fosters creativity. Whether it is in groups or alone, play is a shape shifter. It helps us explore boundaries, have greater creativity, and cooperation. It seems that by implementing playful thinking into our adult lives could be very advantageous in fostering creativity and building relationships. Play is essential in these societies of bonobo apes. It should be essential in our lives. Behncke states that we should embrace this gift of play from evolution. In times when play seems least appropriate it is probably most urgent. Play is our adaptive wildcard. It's the key to greater capacities of trust, creativity, and resilience.

Presenter: Isabel Behncke
Video Date: March, 2011
Posted Date: March, 2011
Presentation Duration: 7:01



Link: http://www.ted.com/talks/isabel_behncke_evolution_s_gift_of_play_from_bonobo_apes_to_humans.html

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What Do Babies Think?

Psychology and Philosophy professor Alison Gopnik has been exploring the link between learning and play for years. In her studies she works with babies and young children to discover the process of their minds. The information gathered is fascinating and changing the way we think of youth and learning. Studies have shown that having a long childhood is connected to knowledge and learning. Our babies and children are dependent on us as adults to care of them. This is actually a learning strategy where they remain the “research and development division of the species.” Until you do all of your learning, you will be helpless. The early period is devoted to learning. When children develop into adults, they take everything they have learned and put it to work in the world. Babies are in the very beginning of the learning process. Many believe that babies are not really conscious or process important information. However, there is an early period in human development where all we do is learn. Babies and children are actually more conscious than adults. Four year olds are better at discovering unlikely hypotheses than adults are. As adults we are good at focusing on relevant and important information, and then everything else is ignored. Babies and children are bad at narrowing down to one thing but extremely good at taking in lots of information from many different areas. Babies and children are constantly using play to research, develop, and make sense of the world around us.

Presenter: Alison Gopnik
Video Date: July, 2011
Posted Date: Oct, 2011
Presentation Duration: 18:29



Link: http://www.ted.com/talks/alison_gopnik_what_do_babies_think.html

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